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GROWTH THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT[1]

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I suppose I am brought in here by Mr. Hanus and the rest largely as an exhibit. I am the genus school committeeman caught in the raw state before he has had time to be spoiled by any too intimate knowledge of the subject. I suppose you are all anxious to know what reaction such a person gives forth when asked to make an address on a subject that you gentlemen are familiar with, because then you will know what you are up against in your several places.

The first thing that I have felt as a member of a school committee was the need of some principle on which we could agree as to what we are all trying to do. For instance, we come up against that question in relation to the matter of industrial and vocational training. Now, there are several suggestions as to a general principle of education that we hear from various sides. One is that education should be vocational. The difficulty with that is that we don't know what is vocational. Of course we don't believe that doing the things which he will be doing when he gets into his job will train the boy for his job. If we did we wouldn't want any schools but would put everybody to work as soon as possible, just as they did in England before the factory laws. We sometimes find that cultural courses, so called, give the best vocational training. For instance, the college course is required as a preliminary in the Harvard law and medical schools. So in the first place we don't know what vocational is. Secondly, we know that it is not entirely what we want in these days—to train for a vocation. There are many vocations in which we should not want a man to be contained. That the weaver should become the web is no part of our desire.

Then there is the cultural. If by cultural you mean educational—the producing of a man—I suppose we should all agree. We may assume that education should at least be educational.

[1] Read at the annual meeting of the Harvard Teachers' Association, March, 1909.

We can go that far. But cultural is, I think, more generally used in the sense of literary, and advocacy of culture is usually combined with a desire for a fixed literary curriculum. It is closely allied, I think, with the nose-to-the-grindstone school, only it isn't quite consistent. It doesn't believe, as it pretends to, in the inverted elective system—that study which you least affect. It doesn't quite believe that the sauce of nauseous occupation should be applied to the goose and the gander impartially—but rather in putting the scientific nose to the literary grindstone. And if art were the whole of life, and literature were the whole of art, I think the claims of that school would certainly be sound.

Then there are the apparently opposing tests—that education should be agreeable and that it should be disagreeable; that it should be difficult and that it should be in accordance with the bent of the pupil; that it should be drudgery and that it must at all events be interesting. All those things are more or less held, but I don't think any of them are predominant; and it is very confusing to the new man coming aboard in the middle of the voyage to know which of those ropes to lay hold of.

Now, I want to contribute a little to some sort of agreement on fundamental principles by helping to emphasize and define what I believe to be an essential method of education and of all growth. The idea has the great merit of not being original. I think it is a principle in which we all believe, and is the nearest approach to any present agreement. It will go far to reconcile the various ideas that I have spoken of: namely, the principle of growth through achievement.

In most educational discussions, each person states his ideas and refers for confirmation to his prejudices, and to those who happen to have the same prejudices as he, and there the discussion ends. Now I want to cite a little evidence from observed and recorded cases. I had the good fortune to attend a meeting of the American Hygiene Association at Atlantic City last spring; and I heard there Dr. Adolph Meyer, the great alienist of New York, who had read a paper; and he described some patients of his who had been sent to him in very great need of help, and whose trouble began, he said, in falling behind their classes in school.

As a result of that they were cut off from the experience of real achievement, of really doing things; as a result of that they took refuge in vain imaginings which became more vague and vast in proportion as they receded from reality; and finally the last stage of the patients before they came to him was a sort of torpor from which it was difficult to arouse them. Now, he said, the prevention of that result would have been in real achievement all the time, in doing real things. And he criticized our school system under which children want to learn to do things but never to do them. And of course his great interest in the matter was because of its bearing on the well—that we none of us are any too sane or too able and that we all suffer from the same lack that his patients did, the lack of real achievement in our education and our lives.

Now, that brings up the question: What are real things? I have heard another very interesting piece of testimony from another doctor, Dr. Herbert J. Hall, who carries on an institution for neurasthenics down in Marblehead. The principal treatment that he gives is to have his patients make things; and the things must satisfy two tests: They must be of real artistic merit, and they must sell. And they do sell, and that goes far to support the institution. But it is not because of that support that he introduces the method. It is because it is the best therapeutic agent he has been able to find. Note that the trouble with these patients was the lack of nervous strength; and that he doesn't give them rest but work; not fresh air and hygienic surroundings, but occupation which will conflict somewhat with these; not good exercise—what he makes them do must somewhat lessen the time and strength they can give to exercise. The cure consists in giving them work that amounts to something—not in doing anything for them but in finding something really worth while that they can do. Again, he found that that which was worth while to them, that fulfilled this condition, was work that satisfied the two tests of being artistic and having market value—of fulfilling an instinct and satisfying a social need.

There is another source of testimony something like these

and I think even more illuminating, because the people from whom I take it have been studying this question longer than the doctors and with a fuller application of all the means at hand. I mean the charity people. The real difficulty, the real malady they are dealing with in all difficult cases of poverty is moral weakness and disease. They have put in 30 years of humble, patient observation and treatment of these cases and have recorded their results. They have, I believe, rediscovered the fundamental principles of education and put them in practice more accurately than any other set of people, with the exception of the followers of Froebel. And achievement is the essence of their system; not what you can do for a man but what you can get him to do; not what you can put into him but what you can get out of him. That is their test—not merely of results obtained, but of the method of obtaining them. The two things in which they particularly seek reality of achievement—they use any device that is necessary—but the two things that they characteristically try, in which they characteristically find achievement, are in sustaining the family relation, and in getting a job. They won't separate the mother and child if they can help it. They won't relieve the father of responsibility if it can be avoided. They don't talk about saving the children, in a sophomoric way, by the sacrifice of the home. They don't encourage the school feeding of children, but home feeding. They do separate the family in extreme cases, but they regard it as a capital operation. When they do it, it is hardly intrusted to the average charity worker, but to people who make a specialty of that very thing. Then they do everything they can to get a man work. They send him to the ends of the earth to the work awaiting him. They supplement him by tools, by stock in trade, by education, in order that he may be fitted for a job, and they will respect and conserve the motives for his going to work.

What is the analysis, carried a little farther, of what those people were all doing? Achievement is evidently the essence of the treatment. And a part of that is the focusing of attention on the work to be done: not attention on this side of it—on yourself, on your arms and legs and stomach—not on you as

doing it; and not on ulterior results. It was not a question of gymnastics. A mother may get good exercise in handling the child, playing with it, but that exercise was not the point. The man may get good gymnastics in laying brick, but that was not the secret of the treatment. I think nature rather loathes self-culture, as she abhors a constitutional. I think her attention is on getting the thing done, and that is the place where she fixes the attention of the person when she wants to make him well. Health strikes from the soul out, and not from the muscles in.

And attention was not on ulterior results. It is not for any bribe that the people do this work of Dr. Hall's although there is a money return. The money return in that case is a part of the thing done, a criticism of the thing done, one of its qualities, not something thrown in, extraneous, afterward. In the same way, in the case of the charity people getting a man a job, the fact that there was money there does not detract from the statement that the attention was on the doing of the thing. The money represents the social dimension of the achievement. It is not a chromo, but a mark. It is not ulterior but an integral quality of the work. The wages are part of the work as much as getting the potato when you are hoeing it, or the fish when you have caught him. And that was its motive as well as the law of it. The thing to be done, the work in hand, gave the motive as well as the law of action. Strength came not from behind but from in front. It was the deed that beckoned. The thing that his mind was fixed on gave him the strength to do it.

Note that there was not a question of hard or easy in either of these cases, of drudgery or interest, or agreeable or disagreeable. Doubtless the work was as a rule hard and interesting, and to that extent satisfactory. But all that was incidental. Any of the joys of asceticism or delights of drudgery that the people got out of it was a by-product. The point was not in those things but in the attention on the end. The essence in all these cases was subordination—subordination of a man to his work—of the patient, in these medical cases, to a task. Health came through surrender—through recognizing that there was something there bigger than he was—and serving it. It was what they gave to

the cause, not what they tried to get out of it in money or health or culture, that was added to them.

Achievement, the activity that cures, is the giving of the man and all his strength to an end outside himself. What sort of end? Dr. Hall found it in the satisfaction of the great creative impulse; the charity people in fulfilment of the relation of mother and child, of the family relation, of the relation of the individual to his environment as a self-sustaining creature. The family is older than man, and has made him; the relation of mother and child is older still; self-support is as old as life upon the planet; the instinct of creation is the leading, almost the inclusive human instinct. These are not chance selections of curative activity. Charity cases are always difficult, often impossible of cure. The forces called upon are the most vital forces known. It is no coincidence that they are older than humanity and the most certain to survive as long as traces of humanity are left. Neurasthenics represent usually a higher type, but it is not by chance that the power called upon in their case was the most vital one applicable to it. So that not only the mood of curative activity is prescribed by the constitution of our human nature but its direction also. It must not only be of the achieving temper but the achievement must be upon lines laid down for us. The channels are fixed in which our life can run. Take it or leave it, there is no other choice.

I think it could be shown if time permitted that these strands of potential life are in the major instincts; in nurture, creation, curiosity, rhythm, the hunting and fighting instincts, and the instinct of membership. It is not a question of life enhanced through satisfaction of these instincts; they *are* our life. They are ourselves as active beings, our projection into the world of force. The mother's life is in her relation to her child, not independent of it; the artist's is in his work, the citizen's in his service to the state. These are our patrimony, and the whole of it, deal with it as we may.

And I think that those cases show that the vitality of the subordinate functions comes from the performance of its functions by the whole. The lungs serve to purify the blood; the stomach

serves all the tissues. But what do the blood and tissues serve? What is the final end and satisfaction of all these services? I think these instances show that the health of the whole body depends not on proximate but on ultimate discharge. That is a true saying that the function makes the organ; but the organ doesn't get the full benefit of the function unless through the function it shares in something which the whole man does. The stomach keeps on stoking down below, and the lungs keep pumping air down. But what of the fight? How about the cause for which all these things exist and work? Our battleships have just done a notable thing, in providing that there shall be messages from the deck to the men working down below in the dark as to what is going on. Our bodies have had that system all along. But what if the news from the deck is all discouraging, or if there isn't any news—"put back for repairs," "signal practice again," "dry dock." They will work their hands off if the ship will only fight, but this eternal preparation—never the battle joined, never accomplishment, never real life—it will take the soul out of the most long-suffering digestive apparatus. The stone gets its law from the arch and the arch from the roof, and the roof from the building. But where is the building to get its law? Where does that inspiration come that ought to vibrate down through the whole and keep every stone in place? If that is wanting there is nothing there to live for. A man's arms will never know what they can do in the way of striking or his lungs in sustaining the chase, until the call comes from the hunt itself. Then every tissue in his body opens in full cry and he is born into his strength. It is in the actual passion of the chase that the hunter is finally born; and he cannot exist, and even none of his subordinate faculties can be themselves, until that exigency comes. *It is the function of the whole that makes the whole as well as the function of the parts that makes the parts;* and it is the whole in its turn that gives the real vitality to the parts.

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Educators of the nose-to-the-grindstone school rely much on habit. Habit is good but is only acquired by the man who does

the thing. The hair doesn't acquire any habit by being blown by the wind. Your arm doesn't acquire any habit by massage or by being lifted by somebody else. The soldier on leave and sailor on shore are perfect examples of what habit enforced from the outside can achieve. And the degree of the orderliness of their behavior is a precise test of the value of the teachings of that school. They are the perfect product of habit enforced by someone else and not partaken of by the man himself, and they show what we all knew before, that it is only what you yourself do that is added to you, not what someone else does with your body or by hypnotizing your mind. As Nature's aim is efficiency—the efficiency of the very child she is educating and not of someone else—she uses his achievement, not someone else's; achievement springing from his very heart, in which he and all there is of him participates—as her means of growth.

Similarly Nature begins with her other creatures as she does with the child, by achievement. The way she makes a tree is not to begin 40 feet underground, gradually build up the roots—"lay a good foundation"—until she gets to the surface, then erect a solid trunk and thrust out the various branches of learning, and then, one hundred years after the start, bring out her first leaf or blossom. She begins *in medias res,* on the ground, at the level of action, and thrusts down a root and a leaf up to balance it from the start. It is a tree from the beginning and a whole one. That is the very metaphor and analogy of all growth. It is a whole tree from the beginning, a whole deed from the very start. And in the same way the child begins with the end, with doing something. Growth begins from the hand, the point of utterance, and gradually, as the achievement blossoms up higher, the foundation strikes back deeper into his being; but always doing something—a thing worth while from his point of view—from the start.

There is one particular instinct—one of the strands of growth along which, through achievement, his nature is developed—that I might perhaps, in order to avoid misunderstanding, speak of especially. Meyer spoke of the child getting behind in his class as the beginning of the trouble. Hall says the thing must sell.

The Associated Charities find cure through the earning of wages. Always in those three cases is the idea of making good, the idea of a social test of what you do, apparently on the face of it inconsistent with this other test of being to you yourself worth while. But that also—the point is that that also is an instinct. It is an instinct that you see from the very beginning, in the very first thing he does. You will find the child turn to his mother and look in her face to see whether she saw it. So in the games of contest later on. Half the necessity of contest is the need of recognition. That is a necessity of every man. Your need of real achievement requires an impersonal opinion. Unless another mind confirms it you are not sure whether you really did the thing or not. But the instinct finally comes in its clinching form with the coming of the team, of the gang, into the boy's mind. What England expects will after that be a very essential thing in what he does. The law of the gang is the law of making good. As the law of the whole nature governs the subordinate parts, so the law of membership governs the parts of the body corporate. Membership—being a hand or foot of the team, being the instrument of the team's law—it is the *esprit de corps,* as it impinges on and rules the individual member. That is why every college society has an initiation; why every club, every society of every kind, has something equivalent to that. Do you measure up? Are you the stone of which we can build this arch? The law of the whole implies a certain standard in each one of its parts.

For the strength of the pack is the wolf and the strength of the wolf is the pack.

That is why a flock of birds will kill one that is lame—because the flock is no faster or safer than its weakest member. Now, that comes in the child's life, with its greatest intensity, along at the team age, which is the age of adolescence. That question of adolescence is a physiological question—not of years from birth, but of the stage of development, as Dr. Crampton has so well pointed out.

And I want to make one practical application of the fact of the coming, in its intensest form, of this instinct of making good at this particular physiological age. Up to that time I firmly

believe in the required course, though not necessarily on the lines required in our present schools. But after that the element of leading somewhere, the vocational motive, ought to enter—not necessarily a narrow vocation; it may be the college—that is a vocation, in the sense of leading somewhere, from the school boy's point of view. But he begins to hear the rapids ahead and the thing ahead must pull him toward it as well as the instinct from behind pushing him on. From that time the immediate particular achievement is not enough. He has got to feel that this is part of his life, worked out as a whole. He is beginning as a man to make good and take his place in the world. From that time I believe the idea of a future of his life as a whole, and of himself as a member of the tribe, as a member in good standing in the community, begins to be dominant and must be one of the motives and influences in his schooling, or you won't get him there.

The supposed great instance of the required course, of that which is not vocational, is the English public school. And I think that is the best possible instance of vocational training. The English public school is, above everything else that it is, a trade school, and the trade it trains for is the most interesting trade in the world, namely, the governing of the British Empire —governing not merely in the comparatively unimportant matters of politics, but actually in manners—what everybody in that country shall think is the thing and shall copy. People can afford to learn a little Latin verse for the sake of that thing in the end. And people who think they can introduce the English public school by just introducing the curriculum, the clothes, don't know what the soul of the thing is. I think that writing Latin verse is very good, because that also is an achievement, because there also is an artistic law under that besides the teacher's marking. In our Latin and Greek we don't carry it far enough to make it more than watching the other fellow dance. We learn what someone did long ago, but never learn to do the waltzing ourselves. But the Latin verse is not the point. The point is that the eyes of England are on those youths, to see whether they will make good, in the most important job England has to do. They are a part of church and state. The man at the head of a

public school in England is paid $40,000 a year for doing that job. That is a mere indication of what they think of him. When they say Waterloo was won on the fields of Harrow and Eton, they are merely stating an obvious fact. That is what the football fields of Harrow and Eton were for. That is what they played football for—that they might win Waterloo. East, in Tom Brown, leaves school, and they immediately hear of him fighting in India. In the story called *The Hill,* a story of Harrow, two boys are fighting in South Africa, and one is killed while their classmates are still in school. That is the kind of trade schools they are, and that is why they are effective.

Now, that is the whole of my thesis: that man is the creature of achievement, of service to instinctive ends. I want just to enumerate, to show you that I haven't failed to think of the matter, the things I think we ought to do about it:

1. We must, in the first place, supply the necessary means and objects to bring these instinctive impulses of achievement out and have them operate. We must supply the mother, blocks, and other paraphernalia that the child needs, toward which alone his instincts can fully act.

2. We must select among the instincts those which are most valuable. We must, among others, use the fighting instinct—not in marks, because that is not a fight; that is like one running today and another running tomorrow, and comparing records. You must use the pugilistic methods, as they do in the law school.

3. We must select within each instinct, precipitate these great root impulses, upon the efficiency we need most to secure. And in the act of precipitating, as a part of that, we must give the child the benefit of the great social inheritance of the race, of the accumulated means of expressing those instincts inside of him which the genius of the world through all the ages has discovered. Only be sure that the flame does flame up, that his own inspiration takes hold of the exercise and is present in it, that you are not merely making him go through the motions.

And I think, in conclusion, that if we will in these ways call forth and direct the power of achievement that is in every child, we shall find, for one thing, that true culture and true vocational training are not so very far apart.